

Kelly M. Kapic, *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology*, Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012.

Though slim in size the present volume is packed with depth and width and wit and truth. Indeed, it isn't saying too much to suggest that in its 121 pages it holds more of value than some of the 300+ page volumes on the same subject.

And though the title may suggest that it should only be read by new Theologians, that surely isn't the case whatsoever. Every Christian, every theologian, should read it. Not because I say so and not because others will recommend it- but because it really is just that good.

Truth be told, it's one of those books that all of us, from time to time, say either to ourselves or if we're the bold type even out loud- "I wish I had written that".

Kapic takes readers on a journey of discovery in this slight tome, discussing along the way the theological conversation; knowing and enjoying God; the pilgrimage of theology; the binding of life with theology; reason; humility; suffering and the justice of God; tradition and community; and finally, love of Scripture. The ten chapters which make up the volume aren't long. Indeed, if one were so inclined one could devote each chapter to a 'devotional reading' and be enlivened spiritually thereby. But I'm of the mind that most people who pick the book up won't want to put it down until they finish it. Each segment is tremendously engaging and consequently, once one starts, one just can't quit.

Kapic manages the amazing feat of being interesting because he peppers his own observations with those of some of the greatest theologians the Church has ever produced: Augustine, Barth, Bavinck, Calvin, Hodge, Baxter, Luther, and of course, Zwingli. He misses, though, numerous opportunities to cite Brunner (which he surely should have done).

Some of Kapic's 'quotable quotes' are

One of the greatest theological challenges of our time is to move our worship beyond self-absorption (p. 19).

And

We enjoy God to the degree that we worship him faithfully (p. 21).

And

Simply talking about God does not make one pious (p. 46).

And

...faithful theology does not despise rational reflection (p. 52).

And

Reason is not mocked by faithful theologians; it is put to proper use as a servant of faith rather than its master (p. 60).

And

... faithful theology requires prayerful study (p. 70).

And many, many others which will doubtless speak to a large number of readers and others which other readers will find equally or even more insightful.

The only problem I have with the book, and I mean this in all sincerity, is with the title. It's just not accurate nor appropriate and I fear that it will keep many people from reading the book who should. 'A Little Book for New Theologians' simply will lead many perusers to wrongly and inaccurately assume that it is a book only meant for seminarians or pastors. As I suggested above, and as Kopic himself makes clear in the opening chapter, this is a book every Christian can benefit from immensely. It isn't just for a certain demographic.

My advice, my recommendation, my suggestion would be to change the title to 'A Little Book for Every Christian: Why You *Should* and How You *Can* Study Theology'.

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